

North Dakota Wildland Fire Danger Guide

FIRE DANGER INDEX:

The Fire Danger Index, issued by the National Weather Service, serves as a guide to reduce the number of uncontrollable outdoor fires. Fire Danger Indexes provide an indication of wildland fire potential and overall fire activity to a given area. The Fire Danger Index provides citizens with needed information about fire safety conditions. The index contains five ratings – low, medium, high, very high, and extreme. Fires are more likely to occur on higher index days, and more likely to grow in size. The Fire Danger Index does not predict how a specific fire will behave; however, the indices do give an indication of overall fire activity.

Normally, the NWS calculates the Fire Danger Index for each county using predicted values for temperature, humidity, wind speed, cloud cover and vegetative greenness. The NWS also issues fire weather forecasts and red flag warnings that refer to weather conditions, which could sustain extensive wildland fire activity. These forecasts and warnings are used to alert land management agencies and land users when dangerous burning conditions and increased potential for wildland fires exist. When the vegetative greenness component deteriorates to the point of creating an unusual fuel condition with a high energy release component, the North Dakota Fire Council will scientifically analyze this condition and recommend specific counties be placed in the extreme category, regardless of daily weather conditions regarding temperature, humidity, wind speed and cloud cover. The following chart lists index ratings and fire danger descriptions:

Index Rating	Fire Danger Description
LOW	Weather and fuel indicators show the probability of fire occurrence is low.
MEDIUM	Weather and fuel conditions indicate some potential for fire occurrence. Expect predictable fire behavior with moderate rates of spread.
HIGH	Fires are active. Expect moderate and occasional high rates of spread.
VERY HIGH	Fires spread rapidly and show erratic behavior. Dangerous burning conditions exist.
EXTREME	Potential for large fires exist. Fires spread rapidly. Extreme fire behavior is probable. Critical burning conditions exist.

OUTDOOR ACTIVITY GUIDELINES:

Low, Medium and High Index:

Be aware of fire hazards posed by exhaust systems and brakes on your vehicle or equipment. Use ashtrays and proper disposal containers when smoking. When camping, always carry a shovel and bucket or five-gallon container of water. Clear the area around the campfire site of combustible materials.

Very High Index:

Carry fire extinguishers and fire tools in your vehicle or equipment. Pay attention to fire hazards posed by exhaust systems and brakes on your vehicle or equipment; conduct frequent inspections of equipment or machinery to reduce debris accumulation. Use fire tools to monitor any open burning. Restrict smoking to areas free of combustible materials. When camping, always carry a shovel and bucket or five-gallon container of water. Clear the area around the campfire site of combustible materials. Restrict burning to early morning and late evening hours when low wind conditions exist.

Extreme Index:

Campfires and all open burning is prohibited. Off-road motorized travel is prohibited except for persons engaged in a trade, business or occupation where it is required. Fire extinguishers and fire tools are required for off-road motorized travel. Conduct frequent inspections of equipment or machinery to reduce debris accumulation. Restrict smoking to inside vehicles, places of habitation and areas cleared of combustible materials down to mineral soil. Carry a shovel and bucket or five-gallon container of water. Use of fireworks is prohibited.

Hunters are asked to be aware of current fire danger indexes. Updated information is available through NOAA Weather Radio, the National Weather Service at www.crh.noaa.gov/bis, or from your county sheriff's office.

Information provided by the North Dakota State Fire Marshal, North Dakota Forest Service, North Dakota Game and Fish Department and North Dakota Division of Emergency Management.